



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
TENNESSEE COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**
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PHIL BREDESEN
Governor

VIRGINIA T. LODGE
Commissioner

**TCDHH COUNCIL MEETING
League for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Friday, February 26, 2010**

Members Present: Andrea Cooper (Asst. Commissioner), Terry Smith, Thom Roberts, Lordy Smith, Laurie Pullins, Kim Dance, Summer Chappell, Michael Friedman, Deborah Harris, and Lygia Williams.

Members Not Present: Dana Hughes (Chair), Paulette Melton (Vice-Chair), and Alan Mealka

Call to Order

At approximately 9:00 am Thom Roberts called the meeting to order. Since Chair, Dana Hughes nor Vice Chair, Paulette Melton were present, Deborah Harris volunteered to serve as acting Chair for the meeting. This was approved unanimously by the council.

It was noted that the next meeting has been rescheduled. It will be May 14th instead of May 7.

Review of Minutes

The Council members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. Being confirmed, the Council was then asked to approve these minutes. If approved, minutes stand as the official record of the previous meeting on November 13, 2009.

- ✓ Individual Action: Motion made by Lordy Smith and seconded by Lygia Williams for the minutes to stand as the official record of the previous meeting on November 13, 2009.

- ✓ Member Action: The Council voted verbally with all ayes, no nays.
Motion Carried.

Assistant Commissioner Report

Andrea Cooper / Terry Smith

- ❖ The Deaf and Hard of Hearing case load was number one in job placement. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing are a special group and the Council is the key to being successful. There currently are 11 members on the council and one vacancy as of today. It is very concerning that there are no nominees for that one vacancy. It is urgent that nominees are found for this position. Good members and good attendance are the keys to a successful council. There needs to be a list from which nominees can be taken. We need to continue to strive to have diversity on the council.
- ❖ All of the Counselor for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing positions are now filled and the counselors are going to the Tennessee School for the Deaf in April to meet their clients.
- ❖ We are in the process of installing a new electronic case management system. It should be up and running later this year. This should greatly assist the counselors.
- ❖ Those who have been on the waiting list in priority category 2 through 4 are expected to either be served or have their cases closed soon.
- ❖ The first in many years, camp for the Deaf-Blind Community is scheduled for April 22-25.

Council Member Reports

➤ **Deborah Harris** –

- The Quota International has adopted the Memphis City Schools Deaf and Hard of Hearing program. We have been in partnership with one another for over 20 years. They awarded eight grants which assisted in purchasing materials and assistive technology.
- Memphis continues to have a shortage of educational interpreters. We have been approved to use some of the stimulus funds to increase professional development. Tennessee School for the Deaf is partnering with us to provide training.

➤ **Lygia Williams** -

- The Department of Mental Health, Children and Youth Services had all but two of their contracts slated for elimination. However, those may be reinstated for two years. The one on cultural competency was providing mental health information for interpreters to understand the mental health system.
- A grant is available from the Centers for Disease Control on reducing suicide through connectedness. The grant is supposed to research services that already exist. Thom Roberts and I have mentioned looking at connectedness for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community.

- The Youth Transition Task Force is looking at youth who face challenges transitioning into the adult world.
- Child Advocacy Days is coming up. It is an opportunity and a forum for people to let legislators know the needs of children and youth. We are looking for a volunteer to attend and stand up for the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing children.
- **Lordy Smith** –
 - Memphis TAD is planning for the 2010 Deaf Expo.
 - The Memphis Black Deaf Advocates is still trying to encourage young people to get involved in the organization.
 - Deaf Connect is having a town hall meeting and we will see what improvements we are making.
- **Kim Dance** –
 - TAD and the TIN center are working in conjunction to develop home groups.
 - The TAD legislative committee will attend the Disability Day on Capitol Hill on March 10.
 - A 13-year old girl from Chattanooga started a petition to have closed-captioning movies in Chattanooga.
 - NAD will have their meeting in Philadelphia July 7-11. Kim Dance and Dana Hughes will attend.
- **Laurie Pullins** –
 - In April, Sandy Cohen will speak at the HLAA meeting.
 - The Knoxville Chapter of HLAA is participating in the Walk4Hearing on May 15th in Chattanooga.
 - We are preparing for the HLAA convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on June 17-20. There are scholarships available for anyone who needs it.
- **Summer Chappell** –
 - Leslie Harms is TRID's new CMP administrator. She will help maintain CEU's for certified interpreters.
 - TRID is in the process of restructuring the State of Tennessee's RID. They will no longer have sub chapters as in the past.
 - RID's Region II Conference is coming up in July. We are continually working on that.
- **Michael Friedman** –
 - I am working on setting up programs to help deaf parents who have hearing children that want to attend college.
 - I am also monitoring the situation with the closed-captioned movies. We still need support and signatures on the petition.

Message from Chair, Dana Hughes

Thom and I have attended two Town Hall Meetings thus far and documented the concerns of each community. We plan to attend four more meetings, after which we will compile all the results and Thom will make a full report to the standing committees. I would like for each center to announce or inform each of their Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities about the upcoming Town Hall Meetings. On April 10, 2010, the Tri-Cities will have their Town Hall Meeting. August 7, 2010 the Town Hall Meeting will be in

Memphis. November 20, 2010 will take place in Knoxville. And January 8, 2011 will be in Jackson.

Message from Vice-Chair, Paulette Melton

Laurie Pullins also has sent several emails about making the TCDHH bylaws and TCA more current. I know that we are to vote at this meeting. I regret that I cannot be there; however, if possible, I would like to send a positive vote for both the TCDHH bylaws and the TCA as composed by Laurie Pullins in her last email dated February 15. By the way, I do hope she can and is willing to be appointed again to our council, exclamation point.

I can volunteer for any standing subcommittees so please email me.

Executive Director's Report

November

16-18 Attended PepNet's workshop, "High School's Almost Over; What's Next?"

December

2-3 VR Counselors with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Caseloads Celebration and Awards

4 TREDs Advisory Council

18 TN Rehabilitation Center Graduation

January

23 TAD Board Meeting and Nashville Town Hall

26 Jackson Center for Independent Living Birthday Celebration

28 TTY and Video Relay Training at Disability Determination Services

February

10 Meeting with Sallie Hussey, Hearing Bridges CEO

11 Interpreter Needs in the VR Settings Webinar

12 VR Goal Discussion-Strategic Planning with Leadership Team

17 Chattanooga Visit at Marriott and Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing —SERID 2012 Preparation Meeting

Various other meetings were attended such as: Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network (regional, intra-state departmental, and statewide meetings), Emergency Alert Equipment Distribution Action Committee (formal name yet to be decided), and other professional meetings where the Council was needed to fulfill our purpose statement.

Center Director Reports

➤ **CCDHH – Jessica Harrison** -

- We have had the NETDA and TCCTAD groups meet four times at our office.

- CCDHH continues to work with TRC in Greeneville and Elizabethton by providing ASL classes.
- CCDHH is working with the local hospitals to educate them on effective communication.
- We're also testing a free emergency alert system. The web site is: www.emergencyemail.org and it provides a free text of weather advisories, homeland security issues, emergency management information and health alert information.

➤ **KCD – Bob Rittenhouse -**

- A group called Fluent, a national organization, does VRI, VRS, and community interpreting. Two thirds of KCD's budget is derived each year from our community interpreting program. We have a very small interpreting organization in Knoxville already that is a for-profit and it's very easy for Fluent to undercut our rates because their income goes into their bank accounts and our income goes into services for deaf people, vis-a-vis the Knoxville center.
- TeamEffort has rehabbed homes, painted KCD; they did a lot of work in the community.
- KCD received a \$20,000 Regal grant that will support our youth program.
- In May, KCD and UT hospital will submit a proposal to Fort Sanders Hospital/Covenant to install VRI in their six hospitals.

➤ **JCIL – Amy Cone –**

- JCIL helped a freelance interpreter take her NIC which she passed and became certified.
- A deaf member was about to be evicted from her home and we intervened with interpreters and were able to help her stay in her home.
- We continue to have ASL classes, training and educational meetings.

➤ **LDHH – Sallie Hussey-**

- The Board of Directors is scheduled to vote in March on the name change.
- Last year we launched LOIS, live online interpreter scheduling system. It was a way for us to provide interpreters the ability to go online and pick and choose the work that they wanted to do, and we are now ready for the second phase of that which means that businesses can go on and request interpreters. The pilot project of the second phase of LOIS will go online probably in the next few weeks.
- At the end of May, we will have a newscast and a new VLOG on our website hosted by our youth center

➤ **PFCA – Linda Lawson-**

- Sharon Bryant is working with our community rehab providers group and the VR staff in Chattanooga. She was also a recipient of the employee of the year at the Disabilities in the Workplace ninth annual awards program.

- PFCA secured the contract with Erlanger Medical Center, which is the largest hospital in their area.

Committee Reports

- **Communication Committee**, Summer Chappell –
 - We are trying to work with all the Red Cross chapters across the state to ensure that they have a list of interpreters who are willing to volunteer their time.
- **Legislative Committee**, Laurie Pullins –
 - I have been working on the bylaws and citations for the council with my committee. I am hoping that you will approve these bylaws
- **Education Committee**, Deborah Harris –
 - I am scheduled to attend the LRP which is the legal law conference, education law conference being held in Orlando, Florida, May 2-5.
 - We have applied, and hopefully will be receiving a grant with the Deaf Family Literacy Academy. The DFLA is a program that is aimed at increasing literacy in deaf and hard of hearing students, ages birth to 12 years through family literacy training. It would be a partnership between Deaf Connect, Memphis City Schools, and Tennessee Early Intervention Systems.
- **Social Welfare**, Lygia Williams -
 - The Department of Education and the Division of Alcohol and Drug both are willing to give access to counselors for continuing education credits through their web sites.
 - We need to know what the mental health providers are doing. We are looking at doing a survey to gather information as to who they are serving, how they find interpreters, etc.

Old Business/New Business

- **Old:**
 - We continue to work on the emergency alerting equipment.
 - Deaf – Blind was corrected in the new bylaws and TCA and the word “legally” was taken out.
- ❖ Motion was made by Lygia Williams to accept the changes and approve the new bylaws.
- ❖ Seconded by Summer Chappell.
 - Members voted and the new bylaws were approved.

- **New:**

- Please make sure that we remember wherever we go to see what we can do to get council members signed up.
- The next council meeting will be May 14th, not May 7th.

Message from Sandy Cohen

I am here to invite all of you to and inform you about Career Day which is taking place next Thursday, March 4th. It is a day for middle and high school deaf and hard of hearing students, teachers, interpreters, family members, or any interested people. We have a fabulous lineup of Deaf and Hard of Hearing speakers, including a small business owner, a young man who is involved in web production design, a prep chef, an athletic coordinator, guidance counselor, thanks to Kim Dance, a farrier, an airplane cargo handler, and a police officer. The program starts around 9:20 on Thursday morning. There will be free parking. It will continue until 1:00. If you plan to come, please RSVP.

The second program I wanted to tell you about is a WellFest that is being sponsored by Hearing Bridges and the Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The WellFest is basically a health fair that is taking place on Saturday, March 27. It is also at the Nashville Public Library. It is free of charge to anyone that wants to attend from 10:30 in the morning until 2:30 in the afternoon. We will be providing a large number of health screenings, and I can't remember them all, but including vision screenings, bone density, diabetes screenings, head and neck cancer screenings, hearing screenings of course, but there's a whole list of different screenings that will be provided throughout the day.

Meeting Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned by Acting-Chair, Deborah Harris at 12:10 P.M.